

Reading Insurance Firm Goes Paperless

Reading-based insurance broker Macbeth & Co celebrated the start of 2007 by announcing the successful completion of its move to a paperless office environment.

The move follows two years of research and investment in new IT systems and office processes - including an 8-month changeover period when the company disposed of 16 filing cabinets and more than 1,700 client files. The estimated reduction in paper consumption alone equates to approximately 3.75 trees a year.

Paper consumption in the UK continues to rise by about 5% a year, often fuelled by extra regulatory demands on industries such as insurance where new FSA rules have generated vast amounts of policy documents and supporting literature.

Reducing the Macbeth & Co paper mountain was just one of the reasons the company

elected to move to a paperless environment, as Managing Director Paul Macbeth explains: "We're a family firm with traditional business principles and we aim to provide a personal service to our clients. We're also a dynamic company and we know that technology is key if we want to achieve our targets and make improvements to our service.

"Two of the main reasons for our decision to move to a paperless office were greater efficiency and speed of response to client requests. We also wanted to free up office space to allow us to grow. We either had to create space in our current premises or relocate – a more expensive and disruptive option."

Reflecting on the transition period, Paul Macbeth explains: "We were determined not to let our service slip an inch during the changeover so we transferred as many files as possible outside normal working hours and in small stages. It was time consuming and frustrating at times but we persevered, believing it was the right route to take."

Looking ahead, Paul Macbeth comments: "Our view is that technology should be seen as an opportunity to improve service levels, rather than replace the traditional personal service upon which many broking firms have built their business. A combination of the best service and the most up-to-date IT systems is crucial if brokers are to prosper. We have been approached by a number of other brokers keen to find out more about our achievement and I am confident that many will eventually decide to take this route."

Established in 1992, Macbeth & Co is a business insurance specialist based in Reading, Berkshire. www.macbeths.co.uk



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